

Raised Bill 6385 – OPPOSED

An Act Prohibiting the Use of Pesticides at Schools

Education Committee – February 15, 2013

Reasons to Oppose this bill:

1. The current ban isn't working. There are problems at K-8 fields and they are deteriorating. An ad hoc task force was convened by the Commissioner of DEEP to address problems at schools caused by the existing pesticide ban at K-8 schools. Every single member unanimously agreed that the existing legislation was fraught with problems. This bill would extend those problems to high schools.
2. High school fields receive high levels of competition. Injuries can end careers and scholarships. Poorly maintained fields result in injuries and fields cannot be maintained at a high level organically.
3. This bill is dangerous - It only allows for expensive, unregulated materials to be used in the maintenance of the fields. Many of these products have potentially more health hazards than the pesticides currently being used. For example, cedar oil can be used to control grubs. It is ineffective, expensive and is a potential carcinogen. There are extremely low toxicity materials, such as Acelepryn, available for use on the fields under existing law, which would be banned.
4. There are invasive pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer and the Asian Longhorned Beetle that can be controlled with pesticides and this is not an option. These insects threaten to devastate our urban forests.
5. There are noxious weeds that spread by their roots and can only be controlled by systemic herbicides. Pulling them or cultivating them actually propagates new plants.
6. There are invasive species of plants such as Japanese knotweed, bittersweet, and new plants such as mile – minute vine which need to be controlled by systemic pesticides.
7. Poison ivy causes serious dermatitis and can even result in blood infections. This plant needs to be controlled.
8. Educators and scientists support IPM at UConn, the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, DEEP, and the Dept of Public Health. This bill changes the definition of IPM, Integrated Pest Management. IPM is an accepted term for incorporating all cultural inputs, including pesticides into a maintenance program. The term was developed by educators and researchers at leading universities, including UConn. No legislative or lay body should arbitrarily change the definition of a scientific term.
9. The World Food Prize was awarded to 2 researchers for their work in developing and spreading IPM. “**The World Food Prize** is an international award recognizing the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world.” I would caution that it is irresponsible for this Committee to attempt to redefine IPM and it is irresponsible to ban all pesticides at schools.
10. Bans don't work. We don't ban all trees because of Storm Sandy or all guns because of Sandy Hook. We look at where trees should be planted and which ones work near power lines. We look at problems with guns that fire 30 round clips and those that have a reasonable purpose. We do background checks and mental health examinations and we have treatment available for those in need. Similarly, there are “bad actors” in the pesticide arsenal and those that are relatively safe and have a viable use in our maintenance program. This is IPM. IPM is the answer, not a ban.

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